III. Corridor Assessment

TRANSPORTATION

FIG. 21.1 - Existing Narrow Sidewalks and dangerous pedestrian crossings along Georgia Avenue

The transportation assessment presents a summary of existing transportation elements for the area:

- Traffic
- Parking
- Transit
- Pedestrian
- Bicycle

In addition, the assessment also focuses on some general transportation issues for the following two locations:

- Georgia Avenue/New Hampshire Avenue Intersection Vicinity
- Georgia Avenue/Kansas Avenue Intersection Vicinity

Existing transportation issues are identified based on community concerns, as well as observations and analysis of existing conditions for the corridor.

Traffic

Georgia Avenue (Route 29), within the study area, is a 60-foot (curb to curb) arterial roadway with four travel lanes and two permanent parking lanes. The posted speed limit on Georgia Avenue is 30 miles per hour (mph), with traffic signals located at approximately half of the study area intersections.

The Georgia Avenue Corridor, due to its relatively good peak period traffic flow, is used during the morning and evening rush periods as a commuter route into and out of the Downtown core. The "Average Daily Traffic" (ADT) volume for Georgia Avenue is approximately 22,000[1], within the study area.

Local area residents have expressed concern that traffic traveling along Georgia Avenue often appears to exceed the posted 30-mph speed limit. Residents have also expressed concern about excessive speeds on adjacent residential streets in the area.

Parking

The Georgia Avenue Corridor currently contains both on-street and off-street parking within the study area. Approximately 220 on-street parking spaces and eight different kinds of on-street parking restrictions exist along Georgia Avenue within the study area according to a recent on-street parking inventory performed by the District Department of Transportation (DDOT).

There are several areas with unrestricted 24-hour, on-street parking available, in addition to areas with one-hour, two-hour, and three-hour parking restrictions. Metered parking restrictions can be assets to local area businesses because they allow spaces to be more readily available to potential customers. Some local business owners have expressed concern that one-hour parking restrictions do not provide enough allowable parking time for some retail patrons.

Ward 4 residents who live near the Georgia Avenue-Petworth Metrorail Station and depend upon local on-street parking voiced concern that they have to compete with other Ward 4 District residents who live further away and drive to and use the Metro. Although the Ward 4 residents who drive from further away do legally utilize the local on-street parking near the Metrorail station, they nevertheless increase the competition for local on-street parking for nearby residents.

There are many small, private off-street parking lots located along Georgia Avenue in the study area. These lots are generally restricted for patrons of the commercial uses located along Georgia Avenue, and not for general public use. There are currently no public off-street parking lots located within the study area. The largest parking lot is located at the Safeway grocery store and contains approximately 75 spaces.

Transit

The Georgia Avenue Corridor study area is served directly by Metrorail's Green Line with the Georgia Avenue-Petworth Metrorail Station. This station connects the study area to major employment and population centers in the Washington metropolitan area, including: Downtown, Greenbelt and the Suitland Federal Center in suburban Maryland. The station is located in the center of the study area and has good access, with station portals located on both sides of Georgia Avenue, just north of the Georgia Avenue/New Hampshire Avenue intersection.

The community has expressed concerns about the frequency of Green Line trains compared to the frequency of trains on other lines, particularly the Red Line. The difference in train frequency could be partially attributed to 1.) the fact that Green Line trains have to share a single track with Yellow Line trains while Red Line trains have exclusive use of their track and 2.) the significantly larger number of daily Red Line passengers versus Green Line passengers.

The Georgia Avenue study area is served by eight bi-directional Metrobus routes. There are Metrobus stops located every two blocks along Georgia Avenue in the study area, with approximately 25 percent of the Metrobus stops having shelters. Most of the sheltered bus stops are located near the larger intersections in the study area (e.g. New Hampshire Avenue/Kansas Avenue intersection) and the Georgia Avenue-Petworth Metrorail Station. A majority of the

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Metrobus stops located in the study area appear to be heavily utilized.

The frequency of service is generally very good along all of the study area bus routes, with 5-10 minute headways for most bus routes during weekday peak hours, 10-20 minute headways during weekday off- peak hours, and 20-40 minute headways during the evenings and weekends. However, the Metrobuses observed in the study area appear to be relatively crowded during both peak and non-peak travel periods.

Pedestrian

Pedestrian traffic is generally light to moderate along the Georgia Avenue Corridor, with more pedestrian activity concentrated around the Georgia Avenue-Petworth Metrorail Station and along blocks to the south of the station.

Approximately half of the Georgia Avenue intersections in the study area are signalized, with several pedestrian-activated signals located in the northern part of the study area. Many of the intersections have clearly visible, double-lined crosswalks and appear to have been recently painted. The Georgia Avenue/New Hampshire Avenue intersection has long crosswalk distances across all of the intersection approaches.

The sidewalks along Georgia Avenue are four to six feet in some locations, and 10 to 12 feet in other area. The minimum recommended sidewalk width for streets with significant street-oriented commercial activity is eight feet. The minimum width of sidewalks with sidewalk cafes is typically 10 to 12 feet.

Bicycle

The following undesirable characteristics currently exist along Georgia Avenue within the study area, which make Georgia Avenue undesirable for bicycle use:

- Heavy traffic volumes;
- Relatively high traffic speeds;
- Limited room available between on-street, parked cars and moving traffic; and
- Short blocks, with frequent curb cuts and intersections, which present cyclists with frequent potential vehicular conflict locations.

While there are less than desirable bicycle-riding conditions along Georgia Avenue in the study area, the arterial roadways and residential streets located immediately to the east and west of the corridor form a relatively dense grid of roadways. Relatively light traffic volumes not only make this surrounding street network pleasant for biking, but the street network also provides good access to retail and employment centers throughout the District.

Kansas Avenue has striped bicycle lanes in both directions for approximately a mile. There are also striped bike lanes located along 14th Street, NW, which is located two blocks to the west of Georgia Avenue and links the study area to the Columbia Heights and Mt. Pleasant neighborhoods. There are signed official "on road" bike routes located along 8th Street, NW and 13th Street, NW, which link the study area to the Takoma section of Northwest, Washington, D.C. and to Silver Spring, Maryland.

Georgia Ave./New Hampshire Ave. Intersection Vicinity

The Georgia Avenue/New Hampshire Avenue intersection has long crosswalk distances across all of the intersection approaches. The intersection's approaches are wider than average because of the odd, non-90-degree angle at which New Hampshire and Georgia Avenues intercept. In addition, Georgia Avenue and New Hampshire Avenue are both classified as "major arterial" roadways, and as a result, are designed to accommodate relatively high traffic volumes and relatively fast travel speeds, which further contributes to widened intersection approaches.

Georgia Ave./Kansas Ave. Intersection Vicinity

The area located in the vicinity of the Georgia Avenue/Kansas Avenue intersection contains a fairly dense network of streets, which form several small, irregularly shaped blocks. There are several traffic and pedestrian-related issues created by these small, abnormally-shaped blocks, which include the following:

- *Kansas Avenue/Varnum Street/9th Street Intersection* – This 6-way intersection presents an unusually complicated situation for motorists because they have to watch five approaches to make sure that they are clear of oncoming traffic before entering into the intersection. There is also poor sight-distance for vehicles entering into the intersection from the southbound approach of 9th Street.
- *Georgia Avenue/Varnum Street Intersection* – There is a high volume of student-pedestrians who cross Georgia Avenue when traveling between the residential area (located east of Georgia Avenue) and McFarland Middle School and Roosevelt High School (located to the west of Georgia Avenue). The Georgia Avenue/Varnum Street intersection (currently unsignalized) is located in close proximity, immediately north of the Georgia Avenue/Kansas Avenue intersection.
- *9th Street* – 9th Street alternates between one-way and two-way, block-by-block, between Georgia Avenue and Kansas Avenue, which can be confusing to motorists unfamiliar with the area.

[1] Source: DPW's 2000 ADT Map